CLAIMS

1. A method of monitoring a filter for absorbing paint particles produced during spray painting with a spray gun in a paint spray booth coupled to an exhaust pump, said method comprising the steps of:

installing a filter between the booth and exhaust pump;

determining the initial pressure drop across a filter prior to use of the spray booth;

determining the maximum allowable pressure drop for the filter prior to the requirement that spraying activities must be terminated by adding the initial pressure drop of the filter to the maximum allowable increase in pressure drop across the filter before the of spraying activities must be terminated;

providing a warning when a first portion of the maximum allowable pressure drop is reached; and

preventing the use of the spray gun when a second portion, greater than the first portion, of the maximum allowable pressure drop is reached.

2. The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein the spray gun is pneumatically powered by pressurized air via a line having a solenoid valve mounted therein for controlling the airflow there through coupled to the spray gun, said step preventing the use of the spray gun when a second portion, greater than the first portion, of the maximum allowable pressure drop is reached includes the step of actuating the solenoid valve to the closed position cutting off airflow to the spray gun.

3. The method as set forth in claim 2 wherein the pressure drop is measured by means of first and second pressure sensors positioned on either side of the filter.

4. The method as set forth in claim 3 wherein the first portion is 80 percent of the maximum allowable pressure drop and the second portion is 90 percent of the allowable pressure drop.

5. The method as set forth in claim 4 wherein the pressure transducers are connected to a computer with a display terminal, the method including the step of monitoring the pressure drop across the filter on the display terminal.

6. The method as set forth in claim 5 including the step of sending an alarm signal to the computer and displaying the alarm signal on the display terminal.